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1910



My Immortality

and other Poems

BY

FRANCIS LEE CHAUVAN

(Name Pronounced Sho-van')

Author of

"Self-Instructor in Reading and Speaking"



"My head and heart thus flowing through my quill,
Verse-man or prose-man, term me which you will."

Papa's Sonnet





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"My head and heart thus flowing through my quill,
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I dedicate my brief verse effort

To the

Divine Mission

of the

Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty

to Animals

Deus est anima brutorum.

Francis Lee Chauvan.

Contents.

	PAGE
My Immortality - - . - - - - -	5
The Voice Divine - - - - - - - -	6
The Heart of Midsummer - - - - - - -	8
The Lily's Prayer - - - - - - - -	9
Sweet Daffodil - - - - - - - -	10
A Baby's Smile - - - - - - - -	11
The Morning After the Cyclone - - - - -	12
I Behold Thy Son - - - - - - - -	13
Songs of the Passion of Christ - - - - -	14

My Immortality.

When the shadow deep passes o'er my face,
 And my heart is still, give my spirit's mask
 To the fire;—'twill give it back in ashes pure.
 Then strew my ashes where the flowers grow,—
 Friends my dead heart loved. My one Atom true,
 That, 'tis said, no fire destroys, may unite
 With seed of lily, rose or violet,
 And then, born anew in their season's joy,
 Live in their kingdom's immortality.

The Voice Divine.

Let us then labor for an inward stillness—
 An inward stillness and an inward healing;
 That perfect silence when the lips and heart
 Are still, and we no longer entertain
 Our own imperfect thoughts and vain opinions.
 But God alone speaks in us, and we wait
 In singleness of heart that we may know
 His will, and in the silence of our spirits.
 That we may do His will, and do that only.

—LONGFELLOW

I prayed to hear the Voice Divine. I bowed
 In aisle of oak, where the leaves gently fell—
 Their expression lost in their season's change—
 And rested sacredly on the soil. My words
 Trembled in my heart, and with the silence
 I tried to blend my soul, my senses hush,
 That I might hear the Voice Divine speak in me.
 An oriole on limb of tree, bending
 To the breeze, made eloquent the hour with song
 That melted in my prayer's love. Then I looked
 Afar in the azure-veiled perspective
 Of my aisle, and saw on a mountain top
 The white of snow, the winter's sole treasure,
 And, in thought, I strayed in its mystery.
 My senses captive held to nature's charm,
 I worshipped in a sweet idolatry.
 My prayer was vain. The Voice spoke not in me.

I knelt in temple made by mortal hands.
 With the organ's sigh I sighed for the Voice
 To hear. The song-glory of the choristers,
 The hushed piety in the music's pause,
 The fervor of the preacher's text of faith,
 Were an unction to the silent prayer breathed
 In the litany of my soul's desire.
 In the moment's sacred calm I listened,

Listened—till the chorister's last amen
 Was faintly cadenced in the sacristy,
 But no voice spoke to me articulate
 To my soul. Before me, in arched recess
 Of the altar, were carved divinities
 In voiceless marble—voiceless to my plea.
 Then in dreamy idleness, I painted
 On the canvas of my mind the splendor
 Of the altar and the temple's beauty.
 My prayer's theme was lost in my reverie.

In the loved silence of my home — alone,
 Where no rite's mysteries my senses held,
 I prayed to hear the Voice Divine. My prayer,
 With fervor wild, became the storm-passion
 Of my soul. My mind was barred to all thought
 Intrusive in my one supplication.
 Then deep in my being was a stillness,
 A solace of expression infinite.
 The truer light pierced my corporal mask,
 My real life revealed. The Voice Divine
 I heard. 'Twas with my soul incorporate.
 I felt the benediction of its breath
 Revive in me a grace long lost. All life
 I held in communion. From ev'ry bud
 Of nature's motherhood Divinity
 Ministered to my prayer in my retreat.
 The breath of love divine made in my heart
 A kingdom universal, with justice,
 Mercy-crowned, its sovereign. No cruelty
 Usurped its dominion. The silent prayer
 Of the animal for mercy I prayed,
 For life, to me, was one fraternity.
 In its voice of pain ev'ry syllable
 Was articulate to my sympathies,
 And with its joy for right emancipate,
 Was my joy in unison. My spirit paused.
 In my communion, I held the chalice
 Of my kingdom's love to humanity.

The Heart of Midsummer.

The divine unity of nature in Life, Truth and Love.

Midsummer's voice in blossom's breath,
 Exhaled from meads and hills,
 Reveals to me the symphony
 That nature's spirit fills,—

Reveals its only song of heart,
 For life from Life Divine;
 I sing the song that nature sings,—
 Midsummer's heart is mine.

I blend with notes of metre true—
 The truth divine of trees,
 Of hills aglow and vales aglow
 In warm embrace of breeze.

My metre blends with songs of birds
 That sing midsummer's heart;
 With song-soul tell of Love Divine
 That Life and Truth impart.

The wild rose on the mountain side,
 And lily of the vale,
 Wave to me the true delight
 Their petals pure exhale.

I feel the breath of verdant soil,
 Hallow'd by the leaves;
 Hallow'd by nature's seed of life
 The Love Divine conceives.

O'er earth I see the smile revealed
 Of spirit great above:—
 Midsummer's heart is nature's song
 Of Life and Truth and Love.

The Lily's Prayer.

In the white of the lily's breast
I hear a prayer;
'Tis the lily's voice, for I feel
Its spirit there.

There's a glow on the lily's breast,
It speaks to me,
In the sweet of its breath I hear,
"I pray for thee.

I pray for thee," the lily says,
"That thou wilt feel
My spirit's love, I would with joy
To thee reveal.

As I gently rest on the breast
Of the lady fair,
I breathe into her soul the pure
Of love in prayer.

When on thy brow the shadow falls,
The light in thee
Of my spirit's life will be thine
Eternally."

Sweet Daffodil.

I bend to the breeze, sweet Daffodil,
I bend with thee;
Thy petals hold a secret, dear,—
Tell it to me.

In thee is my rose, sweet Daffodil,
My violet true;
Thou hast all their joys, sweet Daffodil,
And pure of hue.

Now to the breeze we merrily bend,
We bend alone;
I feel the sweet of thy petals' heart
Sweeten my own.

In thy breath's delight, sweet Daffodil,
My heart aglow,
I press thee gently in caress,
Thy secret know.

In thy smile's delight I see the life
From evil free;
In the joy thou giveth is revealed
Divinity.

Will thy spirit wed, sweet Daffodil,
Will wed with mine?
In love pledge with thee my life will be
A joy like thine.

A Baby's Smile.

In the God-light of a baby's smile,
 There is to me,
A vision of the life elysian
 I've prayed to see.

In the God-light of a baby's smile,
 I sing my heart,
To touch of key, in a melody
 Of truest art.

My numbers float in the stream of light
 Of a smile divine,—
The music true of a little coo
 Blendeth with mine.

I hold your dimpled hands, my pride,
 And in sweet glee,
Count your fingers pink, my heart's own link—
 You laugh with me.

In your laugh is purest note, my bard,
 In verse of cheer;
It tells in voice of your soul's rejoice,
 That Heav'n is near.

The Morning After the Cyclone.

St. Louis, Mo., May 28th, 1896.

Look not upon the sky with color glowing,
 There is no beauty there;
Its robe of azure is the mask deceptive,—
 The mask its terrors wear.

Tell me no more of a day that's perfect,
 The calm precedes the storm,
Nature its fury vents,—o'er havoc smiling,
 It knoweth not its harm.

I lift my voice to the blue above me,
 In deepened breath of pain,
And ask if, in pity, life's Great Ruler
 Will me an answer deign.

Why are lips that in purest prayer tremble,
 In cruel mock'ry hushed?
Why live wretches to profane the morrow,
 And baby faces crushed?

My words float afar into the distance,
 Full laden with my tears;
Then in impression strange of the moment,
 My spirit, list'ning, hears:

“Thy Redeemer liveth when darkness threatens,
 And rude winds wildly blow;
When the Morning breaks upon thy dreaming,
 Thou shalt, awakened, know.”

I Behold Thy Son.

Mater Dolorosa.

In the shadow of the cross my spirit kneels,—
 It kneels with thee,
It weeps with thee, for the burden of thy heart
 Is borne by me.

I behold thy Son! — and the sword in thy heart
 Is piercing mine;
In its pain there is to me my truest gain,—
 A life with thine.

My spirit leaves the shadow of the cross; it goes
 To valleys mild
'Mid Galilean hills and in joy, is with thee,
 And with thy Child.

I behold thy Son with eyes of trust to thine,
 Thy life replete
With every grace, and as my prayer ascends,
 Our spirits meet,—

Meet in Christ thy son; 'tis the gift of a life
 That never dies.
O World! world! what care I for your wreaths that fade
 'Neath pitying skies,

I have found eternal youth, eternal fame
 In infant heart,
In Mary's child—love's realm where no dial marks
 The hour to part.

I behold thy Son! — and now my spirit kneels
 A child in prayer;
It sees its King in glory, no shadows fall,
 No cross is there.

Song Poems

of the

Passion of Christ.

Representing Five Degrees in a Christian Life.

First Degree—Obedience—Christ's Agony in the Garden.

Second Degree—Fortitude—The Scourging of Christ at the Pillar.

Third Degree—Meekness—Christ is Crowned with Thorns.

Fourth Degree—Courage—Christ Carries His Cross.

Fifth Degree—Love—The Crucifixion of Christ.

The Agony of Christ in the Garden.

The First Degree in a Christian Life.

OBEDIENCE.

"My Father, if this cup cannot pass from
me unless I drink it, Thy will be done."

In Thee is the solace, O Christ !
Of my soul as I pray,
As I drink from the cup of pain
In the strange of my way.

I pray with Thee in Thy prayer's depth,
"Thy will be done, not mine,"
And in my pulse of life I feel
Thy strength of trust divine.

I pray with Thee in Thy prayer's depth,
I lift my cup above,
I'll drink to its dregs is my pledge,
Is the test of my love.

In Thy armor of truth I stand,
Facing my darkened way,
My soul's first degree is its trust,
To fear not and obey.

The Scourging of Christ at the Pillar.

The Second Degree in a Christian Life.

FORTITUDE.

“With his stripes we are healed.”

At pillar of pain I bow, O Christ !
Confirm me in Thy will;
As the whip's sharp strokes I bear, my soul
With Thy fortitude fill.

Thou bore the merciless lash of wrong
To give the truth to me;
I'm bared for the blows of the trial
To prove my trust in Thee.

Let the whip of right in its mercy,
Scourge from my soul the wrong;
In sin oppressed I am weak, O Christ !
In Thy truth I am strong.

I bow with Thee at pillar of pain,
I hear in voice revealed,
In Thy voice of love that speaks in me,
“By my stripes thou art healed.”

The Crowning of Christ with Thorns.

The Third Degree in a Christian Life.

MEEKNESS.

"Blessed are the meek, for
they shall inherit the earth."

"They put upon him a purple robe.—And when they
had platted a crown of thorns they put it upon his
head, and a reed in his right hand, and they bowed
the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail,
King of the Jews."

Thou wert crowned with thorns and mocked, O Christ!
Place Thou Thy crown on me;—
O press deep the thorns, press out the false,
Press in Thy victory!

I'm born anew in the purple pure
Of King that never dies;
The only pride of His court is love,—
'Tis love His herald cries.

I must meekly wear His robe of court,
I must bear the evil smite,
And make His reed, as a courtier true,
My emblem of the right.

Let the palace ring with praise of King,
Whose grave's his glory's goal,
With reed of the meek the earth is mine,
Says the King of my soul.

Christ Carries His Cross.

The Fourth Degree in a Christian Life.

COURAGE.

"And he that taketh not his cross and
followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

When 'neath Thy cross Thou fell, O Christ!
No val'rous love was there,
No son of Israel said to Thee,
"Master, Thy Cross I'll bear."

The angel senate 'rose to award
Its own wreath of glory;
Heav'n was hushed, — no deed of hero
Glowed in Israel's story.

When 'neath my cross I fall, O Christ!
Thou'rt the Hero divine,
In my meekness and fortitude,
To make my burden Thine.

In the strength of Thy love I'll lift
Tear laden hearts to Thee,
Will bear their cross as Thy burden light,
Thy yoke of ease to me.

The Crucifixion.

The Fifth Degree in a Christian Life.

LOVE.

"I am the resurrection and the life."

In the wound of thy heart, O Christ!
A light triumphant gave
A life to the heart of the dead
In the dark of the grave.

They rose in Thy light of sacrifice,
That gave true life in Thee,
That rent the veil of the mortal
And made its bondmen free.

Hands pierced for me rest on my brow
With blessing of sacrifice;
In Thee is the love that gaveth
My soul's redemption price.

In the hour of my strange quiet—
My hush of mortal breath,
In the truth of Christ I shall rise
Triumphant over death.

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